

## In this Issue...

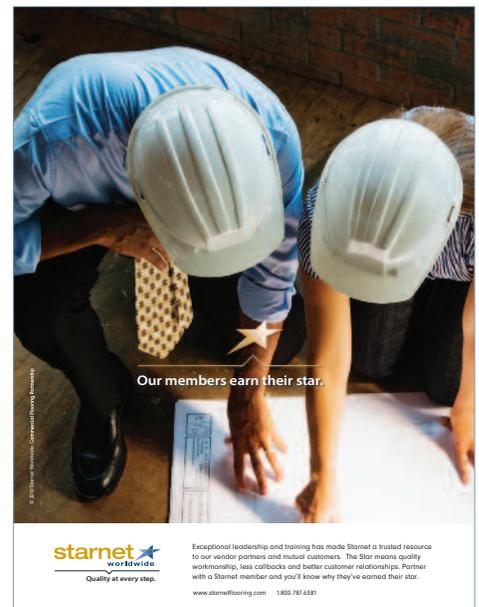
Who are our Vendor Partners and Why Do They Matter?

What to Look for in Vendor Partner and Contractor Relationships. | Vendor Testimonials.

## Exceptional Relationships

### Selecting, Working With and Getting the Most From Your Vendor Partners

**I**N a strong economy, it's easy to justify using quality products and networking with top-notch vendors on every aspect of the job. This is even more important in a down or recovering market. High performance products manufactured by leading brands and installed by established professionals ALWAYS pays off in the long run. On the other hand, partnering with underperformers, be they products or service providers, can turn your project into a disaster and haunt your career for life. Why risk it? Starnet members don't. This Starlog provides insight into our vendor partner relationships and how that translates into helping us help you.



Starnet's latest ad highlights the importance of strong vendor relationships.

Starnet is a member of...



## Who are our Vendor Partners and Why Do They Matter?

Our vendor partners are best-in-category global hard surface, carpet and other floorcovering products companies. Our relationship with them goes well beyond competitive pricing, although that's SOP on every project and for every customer. The extraordinary relationships we have with these industry leaders are built on a long history of demonstrated excellence in our respective fields, plus the desire to create beautiful interiors.

### Floorcovering products and service providers trust us to:

- learn about their products so we can recommend the best solution for different applications and spaces,
- use construction blueprints/plans for accurate materials and cost estimating and to reduce waste,
- properly install their products for warranty protection.

### In return, Starnet members trust them to:

- create innovative products that meet specifier and end user objectives,
- manufacture quality materials and tools that deliver on expectations,
- deliver the right products, in the right quantities, on schedule, to the correct location,
- train our people how to install and maintain their products to ensure customer satisfaction.

Our vendor partner relationships are not only mutually beneficial for our businesses, they're your assurance of great project outcomes and peace of mind.



## What to Look for in Vendor Partner and Flooring Contractor Relationships.

### Choose a company that...

- has relationships with leading carpet, hard surface and installation products manufacturers  
**Because...**it enables the contractor to negotiate the most competitive pricing and leverage that purchasing power to incent vendors to perform their very best.
- can offer unbiased advice about the best product solution for each installation  
**Because...**total flexibility and unlimited choices deliver optimum project solutions.
- has partnerships with service providers for everything from waterproofing and maintenance to logistics and distribution  
**Because...**it allows the vendor to offer advice and solutions related to pre-and post-installation aspects. These partnerships help us expedite production and ensure project schedules are met.
- is aware of and coordinates with other trades on the project, in addition to navigating the flooring logistics and installation process.  
**Because...**wouldn't you rather work with a team player who "gets" the big picture, versus a "that's not my problem" company?
- is willing to stay involved to help facility managers and end users manage costs down the road

**Because...**lots of little things can affect the floor's ROI, like maintenance, inventory control, and planning for expansion and renovation, too. Continual vendor partner relationships can support and prevent facility managers from going down the wrong path.

- **has stability in an unstable environment**  
**Because...**companies who have been in business for a long time have the best financial strength. They know how to estimate materials, labor and overhead to make a profit and satisfy customers. **Beware less experienced, low-cost vendors who make ends meet by cutting project corners, underestimate and live on job-to-job cash flow.**
- **has great referrals, references and testimonials**  
**Because...**this speaks for itself. There's no better endorsement than that of other customers and business peers. Ask for relevant references.
- **has experience designing custom solutions and troubleshooting problems**  
**Because...**no two floorcovering jobs are alike. Complex and custom installations require novel thinking. Even routine installations may have hiccups. This is when working with the right vendor can make or break a successful installation.
- **will guarantee its work**  
**Because...**you want a vendor who not only backs up his work in writing, and who uses manufacturer's guidelines and materials to ensure your warranty, you want one who also has relationships with the mills to help you in the event there are product-related installation issues.

- **is owned and managed by respected professionals**  
**Because...**who's minding the store matters! You want to align your efforts with knowledgeable business people who are in tune with their market and industry and who are **passionate** about their business.
- **doesn't overcome objections by slashing prices**  
**Because...**everyone likes a great deal, but warning bells should ring in your head if that's the first thing a vendor does to earn your business. It's a sign of desperation and/or bad estimating to begin with.
- **has a "Client First" philosophy**  
**Because...**a good vendor is aware of and respects your issues and concerns, and makes recommendations based on your requirements, not his convenience.
- **doesn't "greenwash" products or procedures**  
**Because...**"environmentally friendly" and "sustainable" are overused and misused in the construction industry. Starnet members invest in management and staff training about LEED and related industry rating systems.



# Vendor Testimonials

Here's what Starnet vendor partners say about our exceptional relationship:

■ **T. Darrell Albright, Commercial Director of Buying Groups, Mohawk:**

"With the current economic conditions, it is more important than ever for architects, designers and end users to know their flooring contractor. Many companies who have never done commercial work are bidding projects, and often do not understand commercial products or the specifics of commercial installation, resulting in a less than satisfactory product selection and/or installation."

■ **Rick Rollins, Director of Specifications, Roppe Holding Company:**

"The best jobs result when the end user and the contractor work like a team. If everything hinges on the bid process and not the relationship, you're not going to build the trust needed to get to the outcome you want, especially if things come up during installation. The value of a partnership is that the customer knows you're out for their good for the long haul."

■ **John Bonney, Director of Sales, Centiva:**

"Starnet members only accept vendor partners who are the best in what we do; companies that are proven to be reliable and have quality products. We value this relationship because Starnet is the 'who's who' of commercial flooring. For end users this means greater peace of mind and better project outcomes."

■ **Anthony Minite, President, Bentley Prince Street:**

"We believe in strengthening the emotional connection between customers, suppliers, associates and our community. Partnering with Starnet and its members is integral to helping us build that connection. Our relationship with Starnet members allows us to remain competitive and meet customers' expectations while supporting our company's culture."

■ **Jesse David, Vice President & General Manager, Ardex Engineered Cements:**

"The partnership between Starnet members and preferred vendors is special because we work hard as a team on selling systems solutions, not just transactions. We value and appreciate this relationship because it's important to have credible, trained, educated service and support from a solutions-oriented team to ensure the end user's satisfaction and warranty protection."

■ **Bob Baird, Business Manager-Commercial Markets North America and International, Milliken:**

"Exceptional relationships are important because we work in a time-critical industry. You need assurance that you're working with a partner who understands project-driven schedules and can support tight timeframes. Also, the flooring product category takes a lot of abuse. The ability to build a lasting, trusting relationship helps navigate the difficulties involved in choosing and installing the right product."

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